

**ANTH 376 ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORY AND METHOD**  
**Course syllabus**  
**Spring 1999**

Professor: Dr. Chris S. Beekman  
Office: Lutz 238  
Office Phone: 852-6864  
Office Hours: Thursday 4-6pm, Friday 1-2pm

Anth. Dept. Office: AD 228  
Class Time: 2:00-4:45pm F  
Class Location: AD 232

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This class is envisioned as a capstone course for undergraduate majors focusing on anthropological archaeology at the University of Louisville, and focuses rather more on theory than method. The course is designed to introduce students to the history of theory in archaeology by focusing on the debates that have shaped the discipline; to definitions of science, hermeneutics, and archaeology's relationship to those methodologies; and to the methods developed and emphasized within each of these intellectual trends for research into human ecology, political systems, social organization, and ethnicity; to show how archaeological theory is constantly evolving; and to ensure that students have a realistic grasp of archaeology's strengths and weaknesses and of the links between theory and method.

The course is divided into three informal sections. The first will quickly move through archaeology's early years as a largely historical discipline concerned with the origins and histories of ethnic groups (and the related methodological developments of stratigraphic excavation and archaeological "cultures"), to the formation of a coherent anthropological/ ecological/ materialistic/ functional/ processual approach aspiring to mimic the hard sciences (1950s-1970s). The methods (Middle-Range Theory, Systems Theory) and analyses (Chronometrics, Classification, Sampling) that came to the fore during this period will be discussed in terms of the role they played in relation to theory.

The second part of the course will examine the Structural Marxist and Post-Processual paradigms that challenged this early consensus through reference to social conflict and maladaptation, gender, ethnicity, ideology, and the individual (1970s-1980s). We will be reading studies by practitioners of these approaches, not only for a better understanding of their theoretical priorities and mechanics, but also to gain a familiarity with those methodologies that they have either contributed or which have received greatly increased attention during this period (Contextual studies, Identity, the New Analogy).

The third section of the course will examine modern descendants of these approaches in the form of Selectionist theory, Agency theory, and Complexity theory (1980s-1990s), and in particular point out some distinctly parallel trends despite the rhetoric of hostility between them. Some methodological developments are opening up new areas of inquiry and theoretical research; computer simulations to investigate more and more complex linkages that are impossible in purely verbal or graphical arguments; Geographic Information Systems to process and analyze far greater quantities of spatial data than heretofore possible; and genetic distance measures that finally allow evaluation of generations of hypotheses that either assumed or implied population discontinuities. The implications for future theoretical developments will be discussed, and we will end the course with student evaluations of archaeology's strengths and weaknesses and potential contributions to Anthropology.

## EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

I encourage students in this course to be creative and analytical. There is no exam in this course, but there is a great deal of reading, active discussion, and writing. The course is highly dependent on active but informal student participation and discussion of readings, and therefore this will be worth 20% of the final grade. In other words, be brave, speak up, and join the discussion in a useful way. Do not monopolize class time with personal or tangential issues, but contribute to class in a manner in which all can benefit.

Students must complete two short papers (5 pages each). The first (Due Feb. 5) will require you to read a substantive archaeological article-length piece in order to evaluate the fit between the data being collected or analyzed and the interpretations being made. Many archaeological papers begin with results and then reconstruct theory or hypotheses around them, and this is usually possible to discern when read critically. The second paper (Due April 2) will require you to read another archaeological article-length piece and develop alternate interpretations from those presented by the author from the same observations. Then, propose how these alternate hypotheses might be examined through a new research program so as to narrow down and select from competing interpretations. Each of these short papers will be worth 15% of your grade. Further details will be forthcoming the second week of class.

A 25 page paper (Due April 23, the last day of class) is also required from students in this class, and will count for 40% of your grade. As part of this project, students will be required to read one or two detailed **ethnographic or ethnohistorical** studies (if you read two, then they should use different approaches) of a society of their choosing. You will have to analyze the study(s) for their theoretical perspectives and use of data, and must make a detailed analysis of how the authors' reconstructions could have been accomplished, and how any disagreements might be resolved, through the use of archaeological methods and theoretical approaches. This paper is designed to make students aware that archaeologists are always anthropologists, to recognize the unique strengths and weaknesses of the archaeological approach, and to develop a greater appreciation of the link between theory and method. Further details will be provided the second week of class, but students will need to submit an abstract and bibliography as preliminary steps over the course of the semester. A final 15 minute presentation describing your findings is to be given on the last day of class, and will be worth 10% of your final grade.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

The Renfrew and Bahn book is mainly intended for those of you with less experience with archaeological methodology. Most of your class readings will be articles placed on reserve at the library. I do not expect you to read all of the articles for each week, but each individual should read at least 1-2 so that they can contribute to class discussion on at least that number of articles. *Processual and Post-Processual Archaeologies: Multiple Ways of Knowing the Past*. Edited by Robert W. Preucel, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1991. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, Thames and Hudson, 1996.

## COURSE ORGANIZATION AND READINGS

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
<b>Jan. 15 (F)</b>	<b>Introduction to the Course and Early Archaeological Goals: Culture History</b>	
	No readings	

**Jan. 22 (F) - The Struggle towards a Consensus: Archaeology as (a form of) Science**

Renfrew/Bahn 1996, Chapters 1, 3.

Binford, L.R. 1962. Archaeology as Anthropology. *American Antiquity* 28: 217-225.

Binford, L.R. 1965. Archaeological Systematics and the Study of Culture Process. *American Antiquity* 31: 203-210.

Flannery, K.V. 1967. Culture History vs. Culture Process: A Debate in American Archaeology. *Scientific American* 217:119-122.

Clarke, D.L. 1973. Archaeology: The Loss of Innocence. *Antiquity* 47: 6-18.

Watson, P.J., S.A. LeBlanc, and C.L. Redman. 1984. *Archaeological Explanation: The Scientific Method in Archaeology*. Columbia University Press, New York. Pp. 1-66

Kuznar, L.A. 1997. *Reclaiming a Scientific Anthropology*. Alta Mira Press, Walnut Creek. Pp. 17-49, 79-90.

**Jan. 29 (F) - Chronology, Classification, Statistical Analysis, and the Functional Principle**

Renfrew/Bahn 1996, Chapters 4, 8, 11.

Renfrew, C. 1973. Introduction. In *Before Civilization: The Radiocarbon Revolution and Prehistoric Europe*, edited by C. Renfrew, pp. 15-19. Alfred A. Knopf Press, New York.

Thomas, D.H. 1978. The Awful Truth about Statistics in Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 43:231-244.

Drennan, R.D. 1984. Long-Distance Movement of Goods in the Mesoamerican Formative and Classic. *American Antiquity* 49:27-43.

Sheets, P. 1975. Behavioral Analysis and the Structure of a Prehistoric Industry. *Current Anthropology* 16:369-391

Dunnell, R.C. 1986. Methodological issues in Americanist artifact classification. In *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory, Vol. 9*, edited by M.B. Schiffer, pp. 149-207. Academic Press, New York.

Neff, H. 1993. Theory, sampling, and analytical techniques in the archaeological study of prehistoric ceramics. *American Antiquity* 58: 23-44.

Leach, E. 1973. Concluding Address. In *The Explanation of Culture Change: Models in Prehistory*, edited by Colin Renfrew, pp. 761-771. University of Pittsburgh Press.

**Feb. 5 (F) - Middle-Range Theory and Behavioral Archaeology**

Renfrew/Bahn 1996, Chapter 2.

Schiffer, M.B. 1972. Archaeological context and systemic context. *American Antiquity* 37: 156-165.

Binford, L.R. 1981. Behavioral archaeology and the "Pompeii premise". *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37: 195-208.

Binford, L.R. 1981. *Bones: Ancient Men and Modern Myths*. Academic Press, New York. Pp. 21-30.

Raab, L.M. and A.C. Goodyear. 1984. Middle-range theory in archaeology: A critical review of origins and applications. *American Antiquity* 49: 255-268.

Bunn, H.T. and E.M. Kroll. 1986. Systematic butchery by Plio-Pleistocene hominids at Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania. *Current Anthropology* 27: 431-452.

Wobst, H.M. 1978. The archaeo-ethnology of the hunter-gatherers, or the tyranny of the ethnographic record in archaeology. *American Antiquity* 43: 303-309.

### **Feb. 12 (F) - Systems Theory, Human Ecology and Engines of Culture Change**

Renfrew/Bahn 1996, Chapters 6, 7, 12.

Flannery, K.V. 1972. The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 2: 399-426.

Clarke, D.L. 1978. *Analytical Archaeology*. Columbia University Press, New York. Pp. 42-83.

Renfrew, C. 1979. Transformations. In *Transformations: Mathematical Approaches to Culture Change*, edited by C. Renfrew and K.L. Cooke, pp. 3-44. Academic Press, New York.

Renfrew, C. 1978. Trajectory Discontinuity and Morphogenesis: The Implications of Catastrophe Theory for Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 43:203-222.

Binford, L.R. 1968. Post-Pleistocene adaptations. In *New Perspectives in Archaeology*, edited by S.R. Binford and L.R. Binford, pp. 313-341. Aldine Press, Chicago.

Keene, A.S. 1981. Optimal foraging in a nonmarginal environment: A model of prehistoric subsistence strategies in Michigan. In *Hunter-Gatherer Foraging Strategies: Ethnographic and Archaeological Analyses*, edited by B. Winterhalder and E.A. Smith, pp. 171-193. University of Chicago Press.

Larson, D.O. and J. Michaelsen. 1990. Impacts of climatic variability and population growth on Virgin branch Anasazi cultural developments. *American Antiquity* 55: 227-249.

Cowgill, G. 1975. On Causes and Consequences of Ancient and Modern Population Changes. *American Anthropologist* 77:505-525.

Wood, J.W. 1998. A Theory of Preindustrial Population Dynamics. *Current Anthropology* 39: 99-135.

### **Feb. 19 (F) - A Dissenting Voice: Structural Marxism and the emphasis on Social Conflict**

Friedman, J. and M.J. Rowlands. 1978. Notes Towards an Epigenetic Model of the Evolution of 'Civilisation'. In *The Evolution of Social Systems*, edited by J. Friedman and M.J. Rowlands, pp. 201-276. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh.

Frankenstein, S. and M.J. Rowlands. 1978. The Internal Structure and Regional Context of Early Iron Age Society in Southwest Germany. *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, London University* 15:73-112.

Yoffee, N. 1979. The Decline and Rise of Mesopotamian civilization: An ethnoarchaeological perspective on the evolution of social complexity. *American Antiquity* 44: 5-35.

McGuire, R.H. 1983. Breaking down cultural complexity: Inequality and Heterogeneity. In *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory, Vol. 6*, edited by M.B. Schiffer, pp. 91-142. Academic Press, New York.

Spriggs, M. 1984. Another Way of Telling: Marxist Perspectives in Archaeology. In *Marxist Perspectives in Archaeology*, edited by M. Spriggs, pp. 1-9. Cambridge University Press.

McGuire, R.H. 1992. *A Marxist Archaeology*. Academic Press, New York. Pp. 247-263.

### **Feb. 26 (F) - Post-Processual Archaeology (re)introduces History, Factions, and the Individual**

Renfrew/Bahn 1996, Chapter 14.

Hodder, I. 1982. Theoretical Archaeology: A Reactionary View. In *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, edited by I. Hodder, pp. 1-16. Cambridge University Press.

Shanks, M. and C. Tilley. 1987. *Social Theory and Archaeology*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque. Pp. 29-78.

Kosso, P. 1991. Method in Archaeology: Middle-Range theory as Hermeneutics. *American*

*Antiquity* 56: 621-627.

Hodder, I. 1991. Postprocessual archaeology and the current debate. In *Processual and Post-Processual Archaeologies: Multiple Ways of Knowing the Past*, edited by R.W. Preucel, pp. 30-41. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Occasional Paper No. 10.

Preucel, R.W. 1991. The Philosophy of Archaeology. In *Processual and Post-Processual Archaeologies: Multiple Ways of Knowing the Past*, edited by R.W. Preucel, pp. 17-29. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Occasional Paper No. 10.

Bell, J.A. 1991. Anarchy and Archaeology. In *Processual and Post-Processual Archaeologies: Multiple Ways of Knowing the Past*, edited by R.W. Preucel, pp. 71-82. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Occasional Paper No. 10.

Kuznar, L.A. 1997. *Reclaiming a Scientific Anthropology*. Alta Mira Press, Walnut Creek. Pp. 159-182.

### **Mar. 5 (F) - Ideology as Prime Mover**

Shanks, M. and C. Tilley. 1982. Ideology, symbolic power, and ritual communication: A reinterpretation of Neolithic mortuary practices. In *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, edited by I. Hodder, pp. 129-154. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Miller, D. and C. Tilley. 1984. Ideology, power and prehistory: An Introduction. In *Ideology, Power and Prehistory*, edited by D. Miller and C. Tilley, pp. 1-16. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Hodder, I. 1984. Burials, houses, women and men in the European Neolithic. In *Ideology, Power in Prehistory*, edited by Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley, pp. 51-68. Cambridge University Press.

Miller, D. 1985. Ideology and the Harappan Civilization. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 4: 34-71.

Earle, T.K. 1990. Style and Iconography as Legitimation in Complex Chiefdoms. In *The Uses of Style in Archaeology*, edited by M. Conkey and C. Hastorf, pp. 73-81. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Helms, M. 1992. Long-Distance Contacts, Elite Aspirations, and the Age of Discovery in Cosmological Context. In *Resources, Power, and Interregional Interaction*, edited by E.M. Schortman and P.A. Urban, pp. 157-174. Plenum Press, New York.

Demarest, A.A. 1992. Ideology in Ancient Maya Cultural Evolution: The Dynamics of Galactic Polities. In *Ideology and Pre-Columbian Civilizations*, edited by A.A. Demarest and G.W. Conrad, pp. 135-157. School of American Research, Santa Fe.

### **Mar. 12 (F) - Style, Social Organization, and Identity (abstract and bibliography due)**

Renfrew/Bahn 1996, Chapter 5.

Dunnell, R.C. 1978. Style and Function: A Fundamental Dichotomy. *American Antiquity* 43: 192-202.

Hodder, I. 1979. Economic and social stress and material culture patterning. *American Antiquity* 44: 446-454.

Conkey, M.W. and J. Spector. 1984. Archaeology and the study of Gender. In *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory, Vol. 7*, edited by M.B. Schiffer, pp. 1-38. Academic Press,

New York.

Collett, D. 1987. A contribution to the study of migrations in the archaeological record: The Ngoni and Kololo migrations as a case study. In *Archaeology as Long-Term History*, edited by I. Hodder, pp. 105-116. Cambridge University Press.

Cordell, L.S. and V.J. Yannie. 1991. Ethnicity, ethnogenesis, and the individual: A processual approach towards dialogue. In *Processual and Post-Processual Archaeologies: Multiple ways of knowing the past*, edited by R.W. Preucel, pp. 96-107. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale.

Hegmon, M. 1992. Archaeological Research on Style. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 517-536.

Brumfiel, E.M. 1992. Distinguished Lecture in Archaeology: Breaking and entering the ecosystem: Gender, Class and Faction steal the show. *American Anthropologist* 94: 551-567.

Anderson, D.G. 1994. Factional Competition and the Political Evolution of Mississippian Chiefdoms in the Southeastern United States. In *Factional Competition and Political Development in the New World*, edited by E.M. Brumfiel and J.E. Fox, pp. 61-76. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Savage, S.H. 1997. Descent Group Competition and Economic Strategies in Predynastic Egypt. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 16: 226-268.

**Mar. 19 (F) - NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK**

**Mar. 26 (F) - NO CLASS. SAA MEETINGS**

**April 2 (F) - Long-Distance Interaction: Social, Political, and Economic Ties**

Renfrew/Bahn 1996, Chapter 9.

Blanton, R. and G. Feinman. 1984. The Mesoamerican World System. *American Anthropologist* 86: 673-682.

Renfrew, C. 1986. Introduction: Peer-Polity Interaction and Socio-political Change. In *Peer-Polity Interaction and Socio-political Change*, edited by C. Renfrew and J.F. Cherry, pp. 1-18. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Brumfiel, E.M. and T.K. Earle. 1987. Specialization, Exchange, and Complex Societies: An Introduction. In *Specialization, Exchange, and Complex Societies*, edited by E.M. Brumfiel and T.K. Earle, pp. 1-9. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Schortman, E.M. and P.A. Urban. 1987. Modelling interregional interaction in prehistory. In *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory, Vol. 11*, edited by M.B. Schiffer, pp. 37-95. Academic Press, New York.

Houston, S.D. 1994. The model of the Segmentary State and its application to the Maya region.

Stein, G. 1998. World Systems Theory and Alternative Modes of Interaction in the Archaeology of Culture Contact. In *Studies of Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change, and Archaeology*, edited by J. Cusick, pp. 220-255. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

**Apr. 9 (F) - Contemporary Theory and Method: Fusion Studies**

Earle, T.K. 1991. Toward a behavioral archaeology. In *Processual and Post-Processual Archaeologies: Multiple Ways of Knowing the Past*, edited by R.W. Preucel, pp. 83-95. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Occasional Paper

No. 10.

Clark, J.E. and M. Blake. 1994. The power of prestige: Competitive generosity and the emergence of rank societies in lowland Mesoamerica. In *Factional Competition and Political Development in the New World*, edited by E.M. Brumfiel and J.E. Fox, pp. 15-30. Cambridge University Press.

Joyce, A.A. and R.G. Mueller. 1992. The social impact of anthropogenic landscape modification in the Rio Verde drainage basin, Oaxaca, Mexico. *Geoarchaeology* 7: 503-526.

Hastorf, C.A. and S. Johannessen. 1991. Understanding changing people/plant relationships in the prehispanic Andes. In *Processual and Post-Processual Archaeologies: Multiple Ways of Knowing the Past*, edited by R.W. Preucel, pp. 265-274. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Occasional Paper No. 10.

Blanton, R.E., G.M. Feinman, S.A. Kowalewski, and P.N. Peregrine. 1996. A Dual-Processual Theory for the Evolution of Mesoamerican Civilization. *Current Anthropology* 37: 1-14.

Beekman, C.S., and A.F. Christensen. 1998. A Synthetic Analysis of the Nahua Migrations. To be submitted to *Current Anthropology*.

#### **Apr. 16 (F) - New Directions**

Joyce, A.A. 1997. Agency and Structure in Archaeology. Paper presented at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Nashville.

Baden, W.W. 1995. The Impact of Fluctuating Agricultural Potential on Coosa's Sociopolitical and Settlement Systems. <http://www.ipfw.edu/kt1/baden/web/coosa/paper.html>

Kantner, J. 1996. An Evaluation of Chaco Anasazi Roadways.

<http://www.sscf.ucsb.edu/anth/projects/lobo/SAA96/>

Shennan, S.J. 1991. Tradition, Rationality, and Cultural Transmission. In *Processual and Postprocessual Archaeologies*, edited by R.W. Preucel, pp. 197-208. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Occasional Paper No. 10.

Maschner, H.D.G. and S. Mithen. 1996 Darwinian Archaeologies: An Introductory Essay. In *Darwinian Archaeologies*, edited by H.D.G. Maschner, pp. 3-14. Plenum Press, New York.

O'Brien, M.J. 1996 The Historical Development of an Evolutionary Archaeology: A Selectionist Approach. In *Darwinian Archaeologies*, edited by H.D.G. Maschner, pp. 17-32. Plenum Press, New York.

#### **Apr. 23 (F) - Commonalities (paper and class presentation due)**

McGlade, J. and S.E. Van Der Leeuw. 1997. Introduction: Archaeology and non-linear dynamics - new approaches to long-term change. In *Time, Process, and Structured Transformation in Archaeology*, edited by S.E. Van Der Leeuw and J. McGlade, pp. 1-31. Routledge, London.

Miller, D., M. Rowlands, and C. Tilley. 1989. Introduction. In *Domination and Resistance*, edited by D. Miller, M. Rowlands, and C. Tilley, pp. 1-26. Unwin Hyman, London.

Graves-Brown, P. 1996 In Search of the Watchmaker: Attribution of Agency in Natural and Cultural Selection. In *Darwinian Archaeologies*, edited by H.D.G. Maschner, pp. 165-181. Plenum Press, New York.

Kuznar, L.A. 1997. *Reclaiming a Scientific Anthropology*. Alta Mira Press, Walnut Creek. Pp. 211-224.